CHARLTON COMICS
711-469
FLASH GORDON
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NO. 13
APRIL
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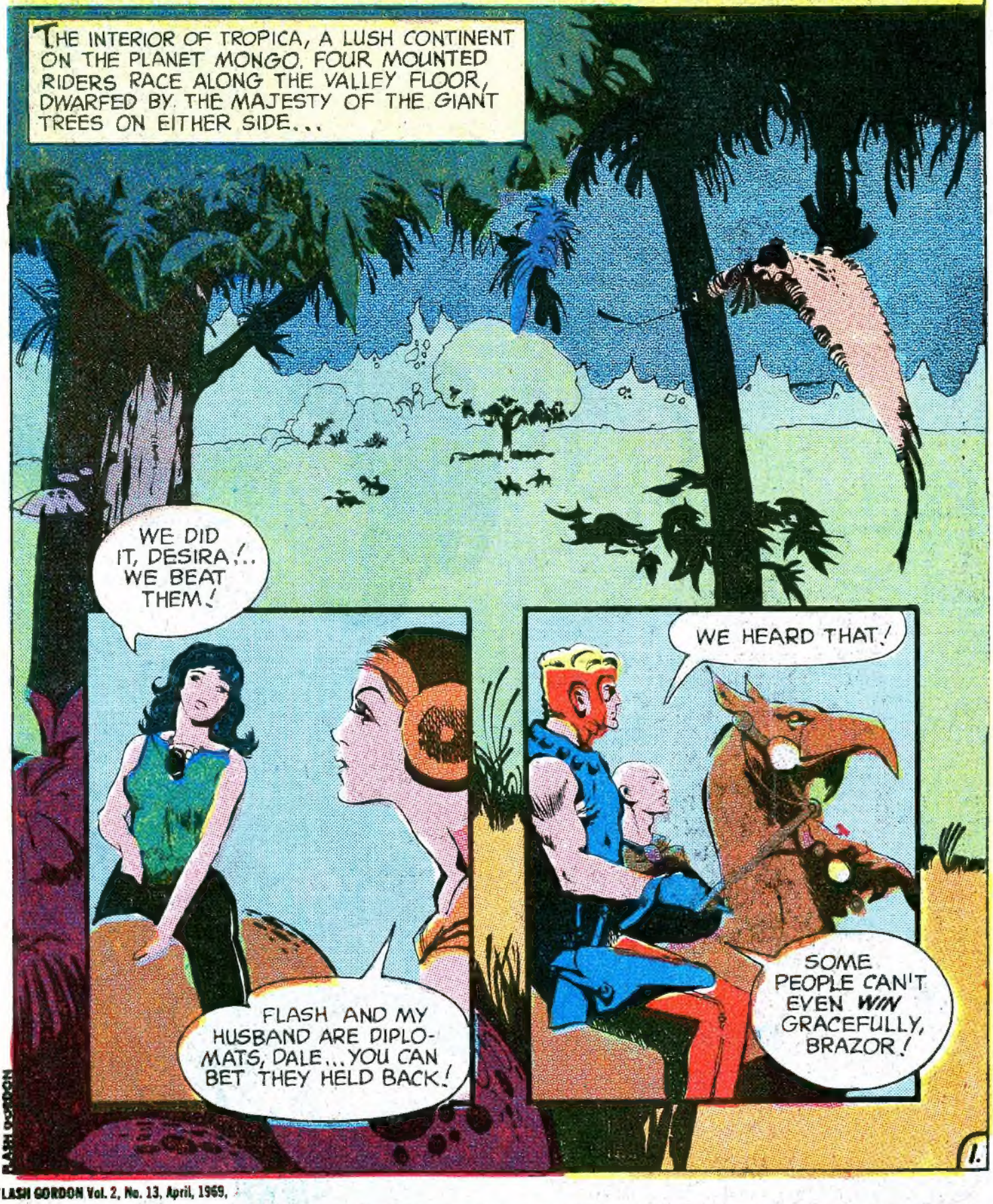
12¢
TRAPPED IN THE CAVE OF THE MUD MEN

FLASH GORDON and the MONSTER MEN OF TROPICA!


THE INTERIOR OF TROPICA, A LUSH CONTINENT ON THE PLANET MONGO. FOUR MOUNTED RIDERS RACE ALONG THE VALLEY FLOOR, DWARFED BY THE MAJESTY OF THE GIANT TREES ON EITHER SIDE...
WE DID IT, DESIRA!.. WE BEAT THEM!
FLASH AND MY HUSBAND ARE DIPLOMATS, DALE...YOU CAN BET THEY HELD BACK!
WE HEARD THAT!
SOME PEOPLE CAN'T EVEN WIN GRACEFULLY, BRAZOR!
FLASH GORDON
1.

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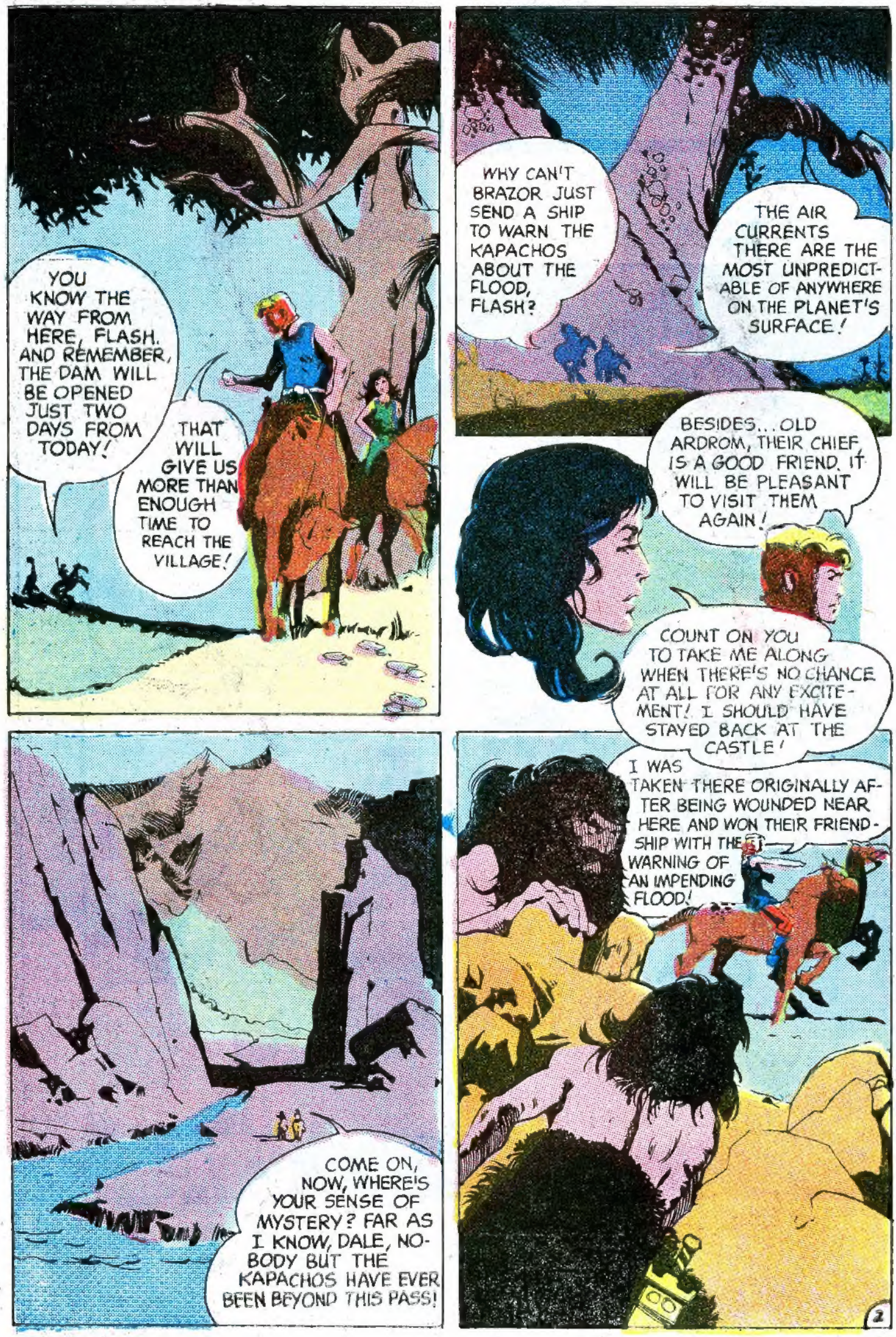
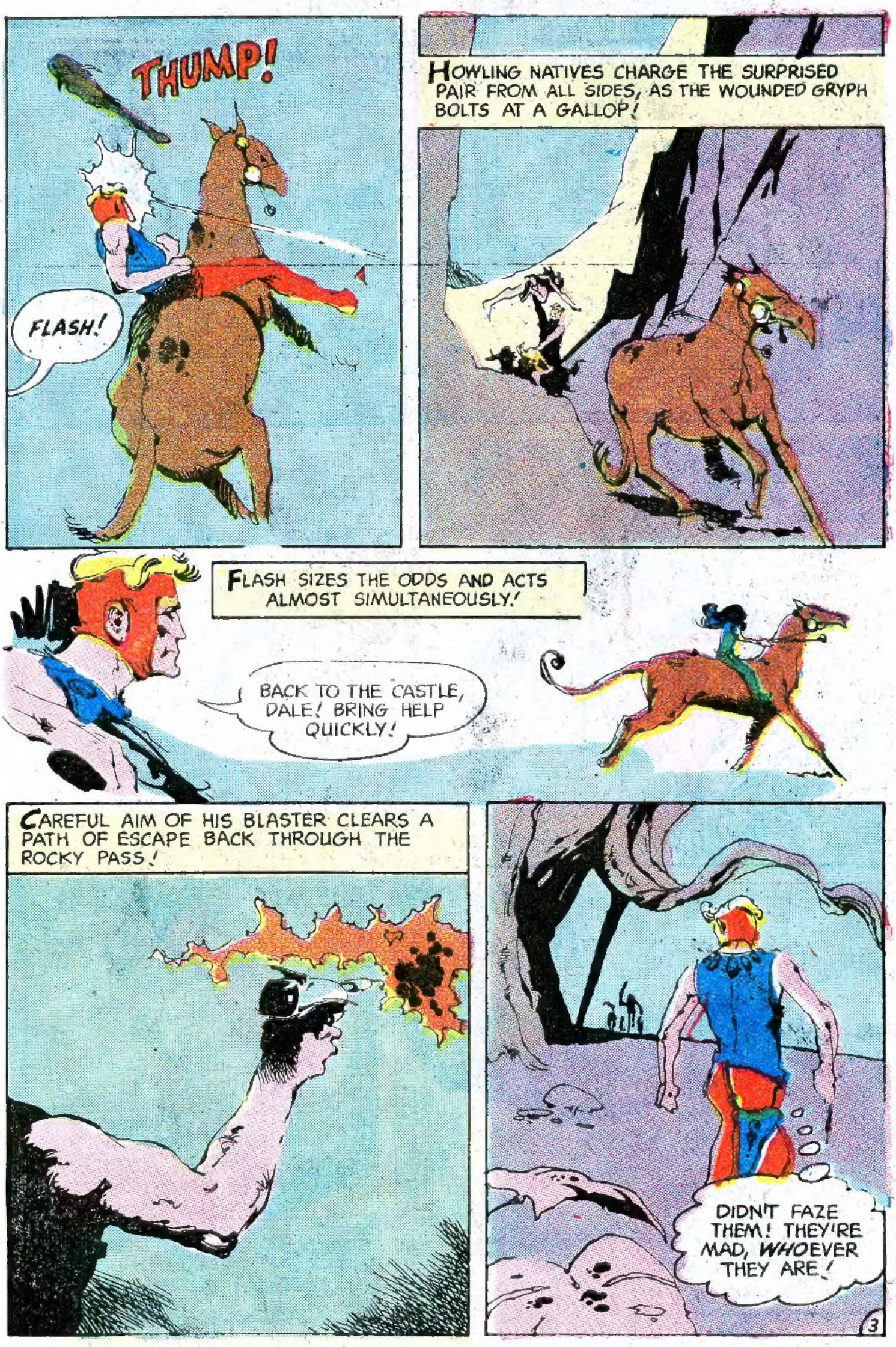
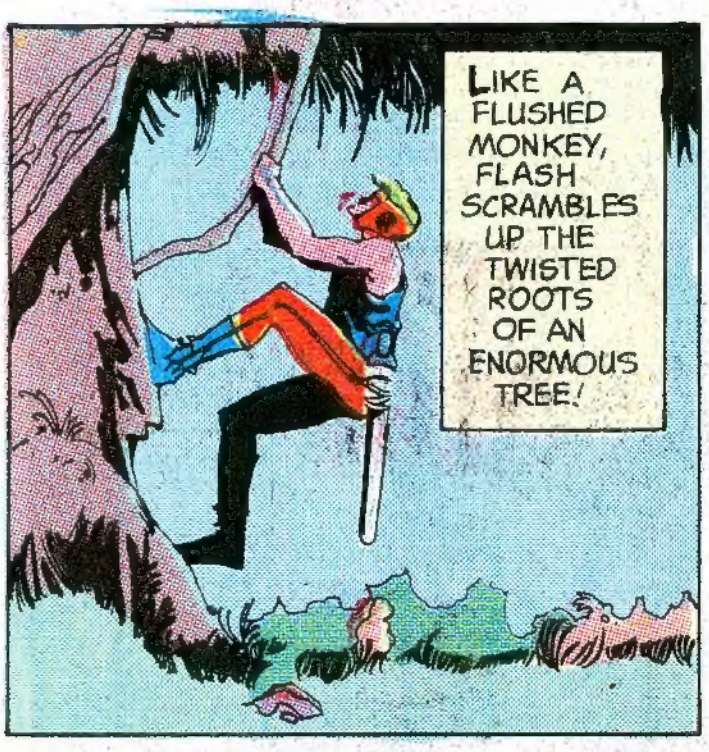
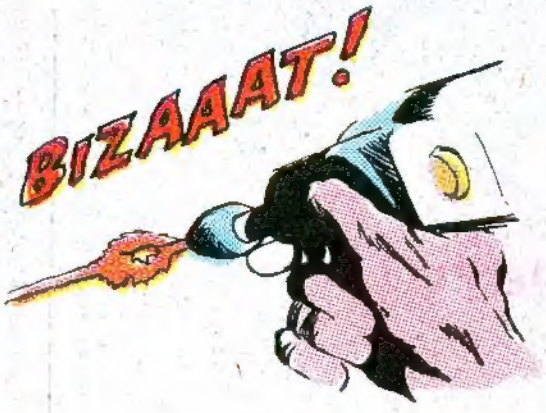
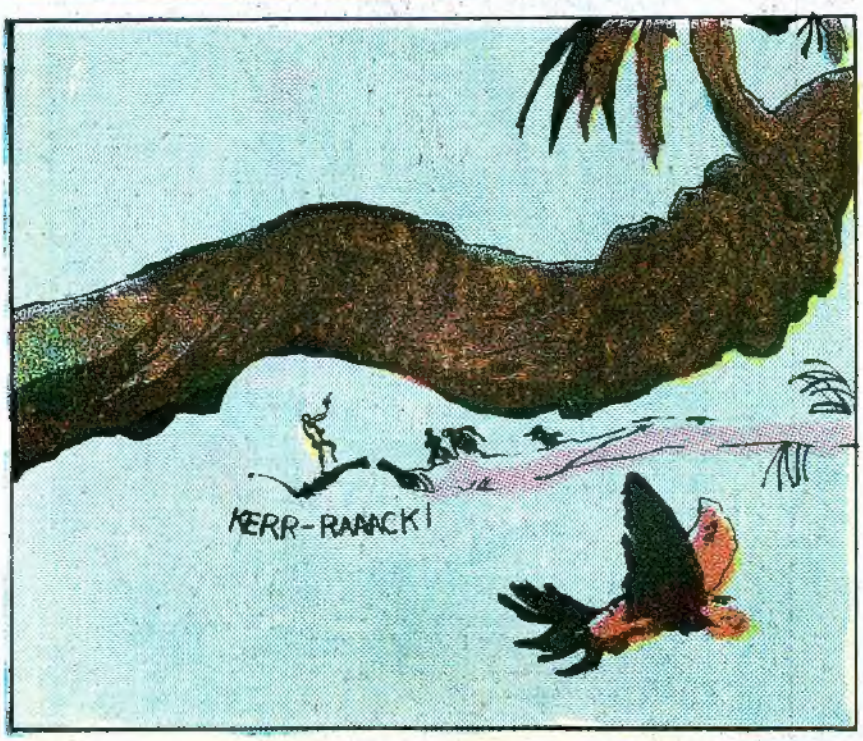
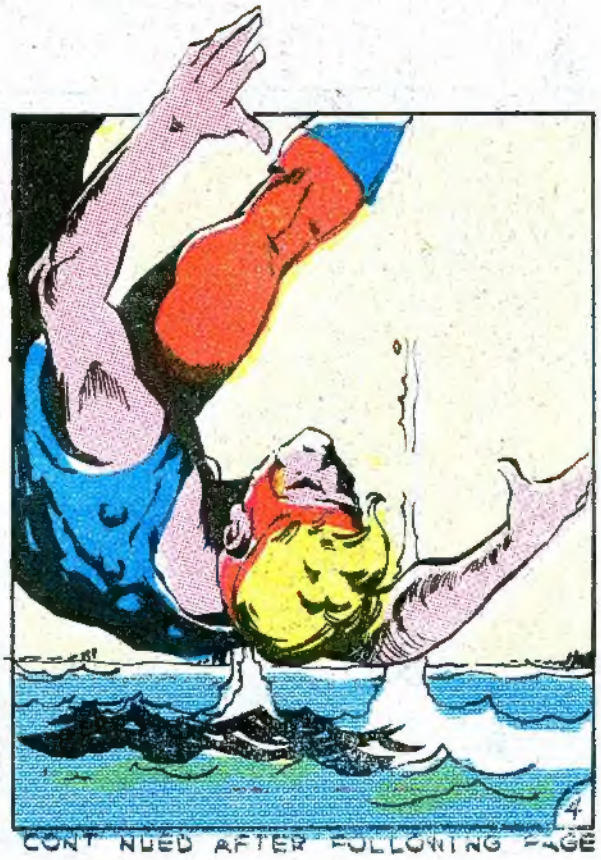

YOU KNOW THE WAY FROM HERE, FLASH. AND REMEMBER, THE DAM WILL BE OPENED JUST TWO DAYS FROM TODAY!
THAT WILL GIVE US MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME TO REACH THE VILLAGE!
WHY CAN'T BRAZOR JUST SEND A SHIP TO WARN THE KAPACHOS ABOUT THE FLOOD, FLASH?
THE AIR CURRENTS THERE ARE THE MOST UNPREDICTABLE OF ANYWHERE ON THE PLANET'S SURFACE!
BESIDES... OLD ARDROM, THEIR CHIEF, IS A GOOD FRIEND. IT WILL BE PLEASANT TO VISIT THEM AGAIN!
COUNT ON YOU TO TAKE ME ALONG WHEN THERE'S NO CHANCE AT ALL FOR ANY EXCITEMENT! I SHOULD HAVE STAYED BACK AT THE CASTLE!
I WAS TAKEN THERE ORIGINALLY AFTER BEING WOUNDED NEAR HERE AND WON THEIR FRIENDSHIP WITH THE WARNING OF AN IMPENDING FLOOD!
COME ON, NOW, WHERE'S YOUR SENSE OF MYSTERY? FAR AS I KNOW, DALE, NOBODY BUT THE KAPACHOS HAVE EVER BEEN BEYOND THIS PASS!
2


THUMP!
FLASH!
HOWLING NATIVES CHARGE THE SURPRISED PAIR FROM ALL SIDES, AS THE WOUNDED GRYPH BOLTS AT A GALLOP!
FLASH SIZES THE ODDS AND ACTS ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY!
BACK TO THE CASTLE, DALE! BRING HELP QUICKLY!
CAREFUL AIM OF HIS BLASTER CLEARS A PATH OF ESCAPE BACK THROUGH THE ROCKY PASS!
DIDN'T FAZE THEM! THEY'RE MAD, WHOEVER THEY ARE!
3









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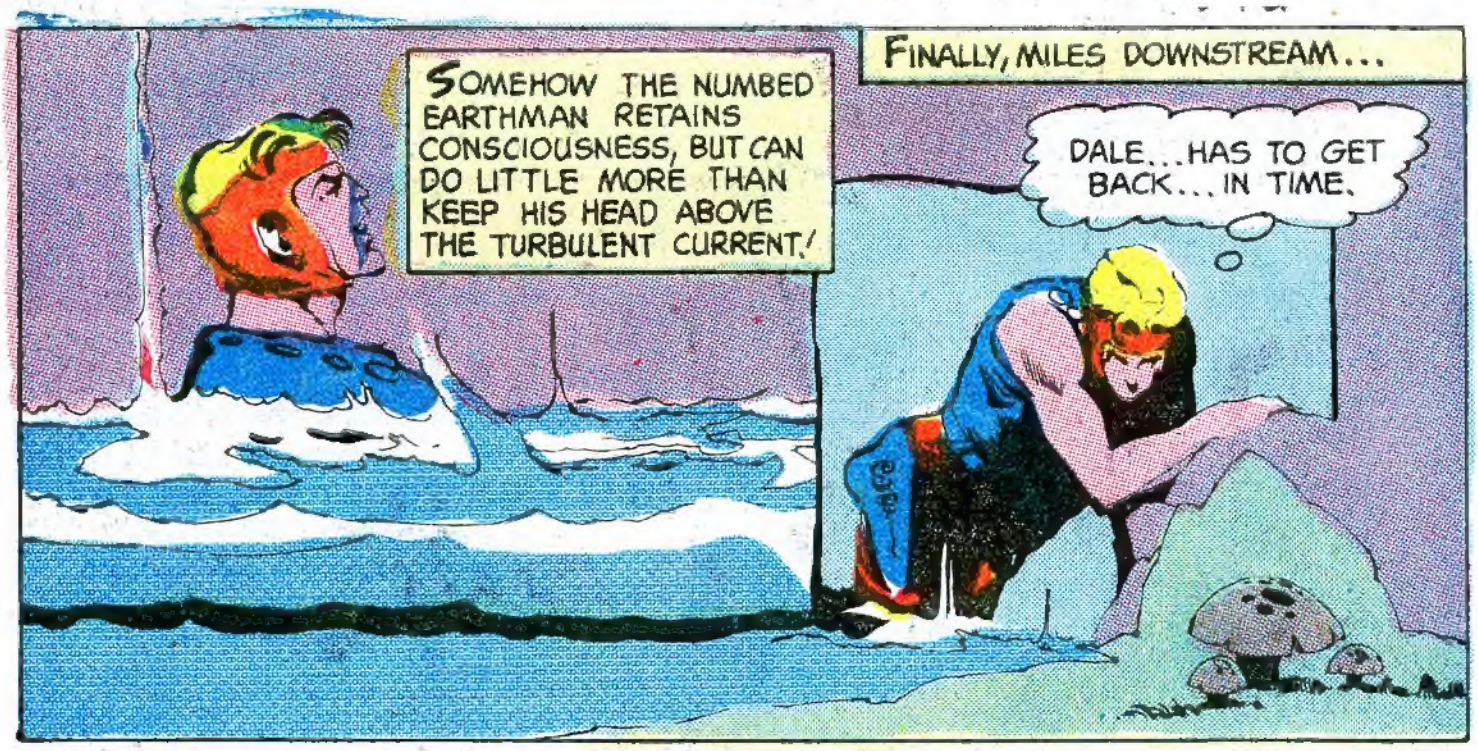
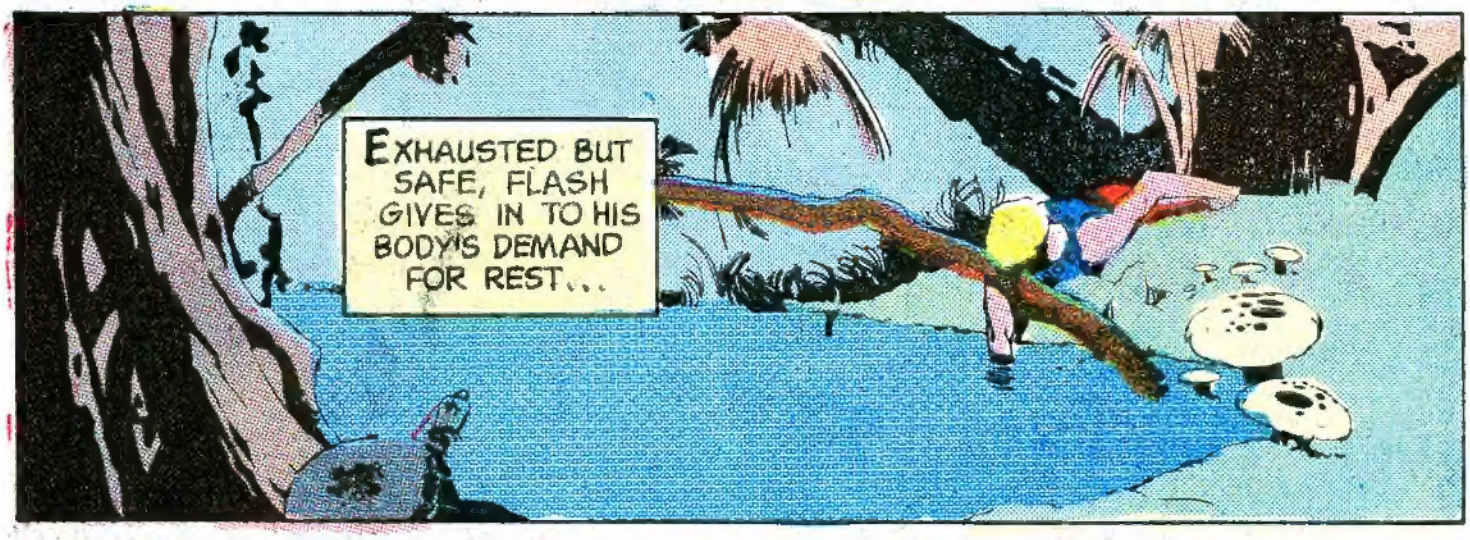
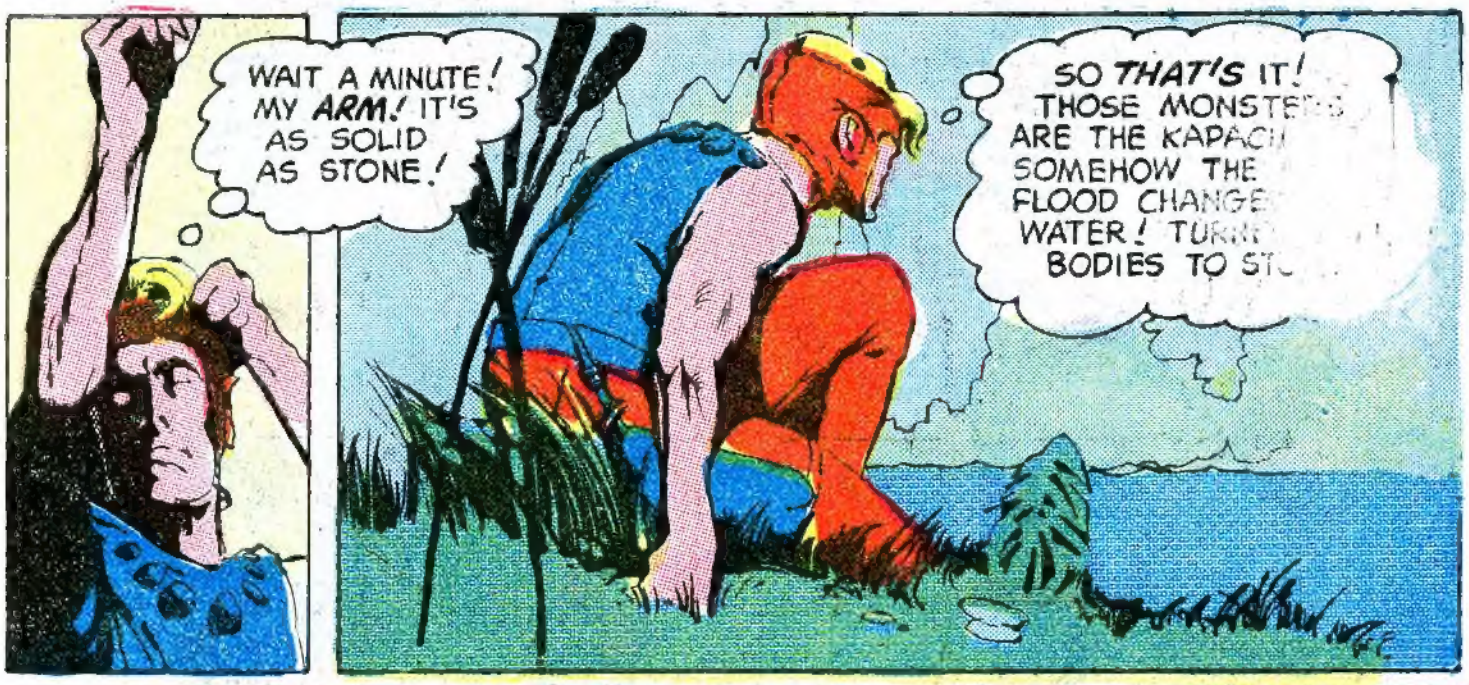

SOMEHOW THE NUMBED EARTHMAN RETAINS CONSCIOUSNESS, BUT CAN DO LITTLE MORE THAN KEEP HIS HEAD ABOVE THE TURBULENT CURRENT!
FINALLY, MILES DOWNSTREAM...
DALE...HAS TO GET BACK...IN TIME.


EXHAUSTED BUT SAFE, FLASH GIVES IN TO HIS BODY'S DEMAND FOR REST...

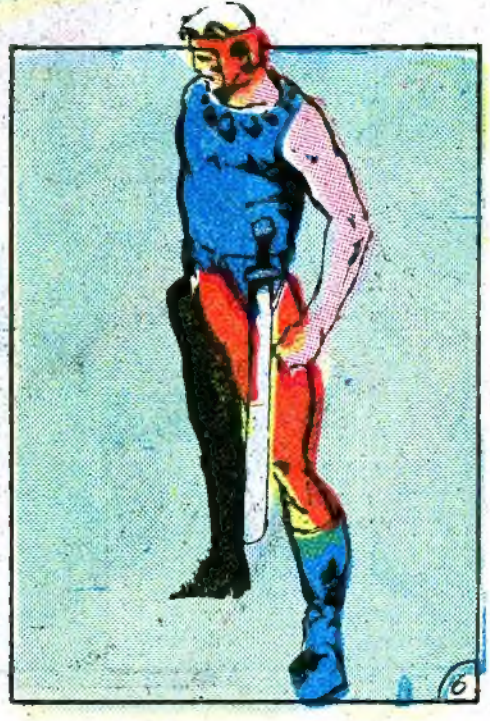
NEVER KNOWING HOW CLOSE THE CHANCES OF CAPTURE DURING THE DARK HOURS OF NIGHT...

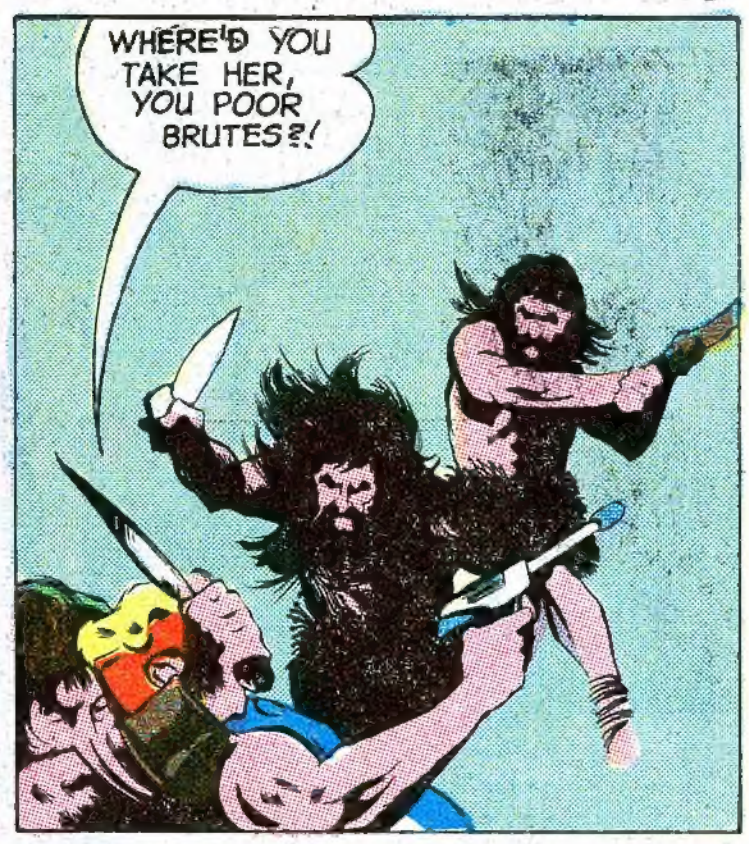
WEEEE... AM I STIFF!
5


WAIT A MINUTE! MY ARM! IT'S AS SOLID AS STONE!
SO THAT'S IT! THOSE MONSTERS ARE THE KAPACHI SOMEHOW THE FLOOD CHANGED WATER! TURNING BODIES TO STONE!

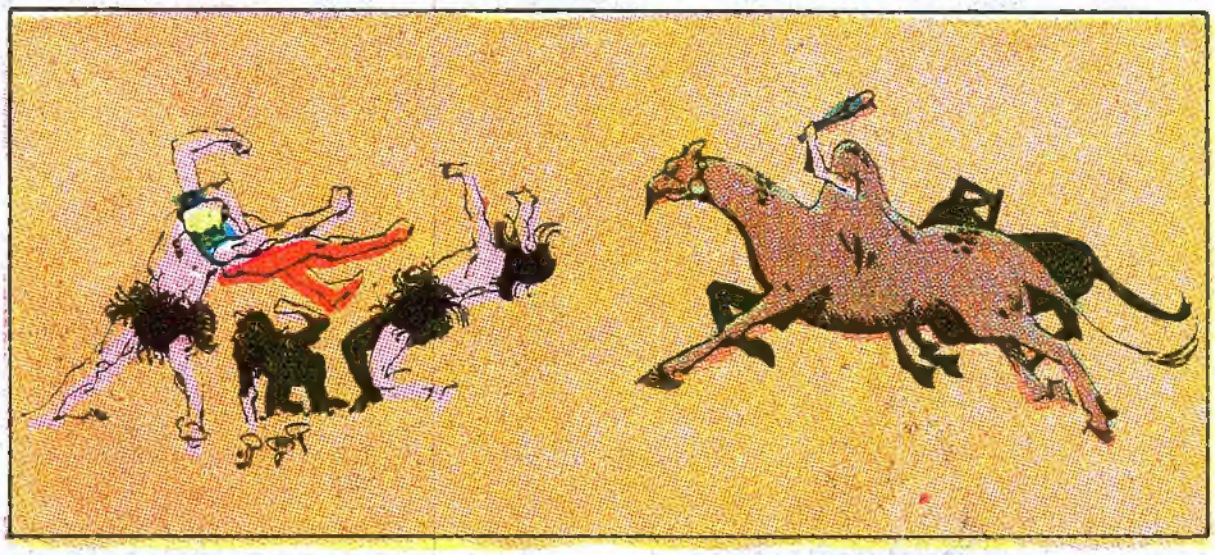
I'LL HAVE TO RETRACE MY STEPS... BACK THROUGH THE PASS. WE'LL HAVE TO POSTPONE THE NEXT FLOOD UNTIL WE FIND OUT JUST WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE!

BUT THERE'S A RUDE SHOCK WAITING FOR FLASH, NEAR WHERE HE AND DALE HAD BEEN AMBUSHED THE DAY BEFORE...





DESPITE HIS UNDAUNTED FURY, FLASH IS ALMOST BURIED BY THE FIERCE MONSTERMEN UNTIL UNEXPECTED AID ARRIVES!

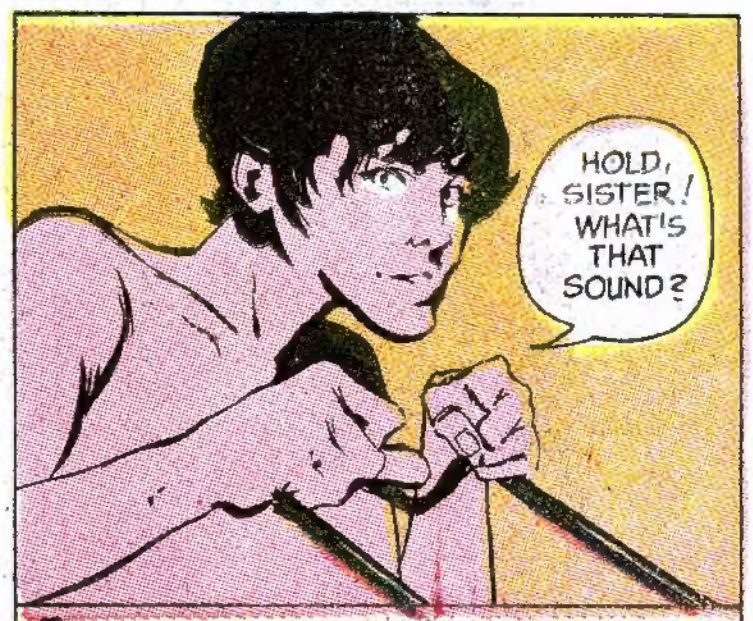


THE STRANGE CREATURES HEAD STRAIGHT FOR FLASH!

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANY SPECIES ON MONGO LIKE THIS...
MY NAME IS GORDON... CAN YOU UNDERSTAND ME?
WE NOT ONLY UNDERSTAND, WE KNOW AND WELCOME YOU BACK TO OUR LAND, FLASH GORDON!
YOU!... THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF THE KAPACHOS!
YES, WE ESCAPED THE MAGIC WATERS BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE. OUR MEN, WHO MUST FISH EACH DAY, WERE NOT SO LUCKY!
WE FASHIONED THESE DISGUISES TO FRIGHTEN THE MEN, WHEN WE GO OUT IN SEARCH OF FOOD... AND SO WE COULD FIGHT THEM WHEN WE MUST!
DID YOU SEE WHERE THEY TOOK THE GIRL?!
NO, BUT WE CAN GUESS WHERE SHE IS... BACK AT THE VILLAGE!
IS THERE A CHANCE SHE'S STILL... ALIVE?!
8

THERE'S A CHANCE. WE'LL TAKE YOU THERE. BUT WHAT BROUGHT YOU HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE?
UNLESS WE CAN STOP IT, THERE'S TO BE A *SECOND* FLOOD... AND IT MAY SUBMERGE THE ENTIRE VALLEY UNDER WATER!
TANEC AND LAREN WILL TAKE THE MESSAGE!
FOLLOW THE RIVER STRAIGHT BACK TO THE DAM... IT'S A LONG DAY'S RIDE!

IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION, THE TWO YOUNG RIDERS RACE THROUGH THE NIGHT ON THEIR DESPERATE MISSION..



BUT BY THE FIRST RAYS OF THE SUN, FAR SHORT OF THEIR DESTINATION...

LOOK! WE MUST GET OFF THE TRAIL!
ROOOOOOOOAAAARR!
THE DRONE SWELLS TO A DEAFENING ROAR, AS THEIR STEEDS STRAIN TO CLIMB THE STEEP HILL!
THIS SHALE IS LIKE QUICKSAND, LAREN!
WE'LL BE SAFE IF WE CAN REACH THE TOP!
MADE IT!
RRRRRUSSSH!!
...BUT IT'S TOO LATE... FOR THE OTHERS!
AT ABOUT THE SAME MOMENT, FLASH AND HIS FRIENDS OVERLOOK THE HALF RUINED VILLAGE OF THE KAPACHOS...
NO!
QUIET! AT LEAST SHE'S ALIVE!
BUT--THEY'VE CHANGED HER TO SOLID STONE!
10

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

THE EFFECT WEARS OFF, IN TIME!
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. AT MY SIGNAL, YOU ATTRACT THEIR ATTENTION, AND LURE THEM OUT OF THAT BASIN!
HATE PROMPTS THE DECISION TO ATTACK, AS FLASH PUTS HIS EAR TO THE GROUND.
IT'S STILL MILES AWAY...BUT IT'S COMING!
WE'VE ONLY A FEW MINUTES LEFT--LET THEM HAVE IT!
ALL AROUND THEM, THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN GIVE OUT WITH A HOWLING CLAMOR!
?
UM?!
ARURGH!
AND TAUNT THEIR DEMENTED TRIBESMEN WITH STONES AND LITTER!
NOW RUN!
11

THEIR FRESH LIVING STATUE FORGOTTEN, THE ENRAGED KAPACHOS TEAR OUT IN PURSUIT OF THEIR TORMENTORS!
I'VE GOT TO GET DALE OUT OF HERE BEFORE IT HITS!
OOROOWR!
RRRRRRRRRRRRR
OUT OF MY WAY, YOU GOOFY MARBLEHEADS!
OOORGRUMPH!
RUSSSHHHHHH!
12

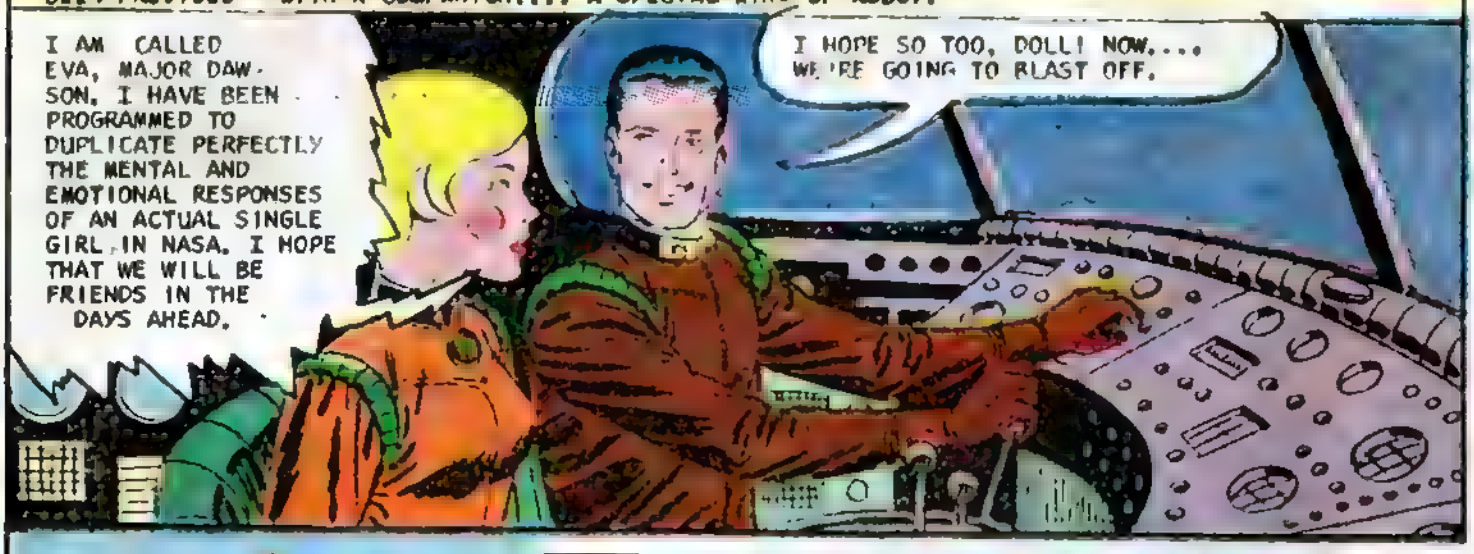
AND HANGS HIS HEAD IN BLEAK DESOLATION.
THE BATTERED FIGURE STRAGGLES TO THE NEWLY-FORMED SHORE-LINE, A MILE DOWN-STREAM.
SHE'S GONE DALE'S GONE FOREVER...
COME QUICKLY! WE MUST HIDE! OUR FATHERS HAVE NOT YET ALL RETURNED TO THEIR SENSES!
GO? ... GO WHERE? ...
BUT, FLASH, IF HER BODY REMAINS SOLID, SHE MIGHT STILL BE ALIVE!
SHE'S A HUNDRED FEET UNDER THOSE WAVES... IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
WITHIN HOURS THE CHAOS HAS ENDED, AND ONLY THE DEBRIS AND THE RAGGED CONDITION OF THE SURVIVORS ATTESTS TO THE FURY OF THE FLOOD.
HOW CAN I APOLOGIZE, FLASH?
YOU CAN'T BE BLAMED, ARDROM...
MY PEOPLE WILL TRY TO FIND HER! IT'S THE LEAST WE CAN DO!
13

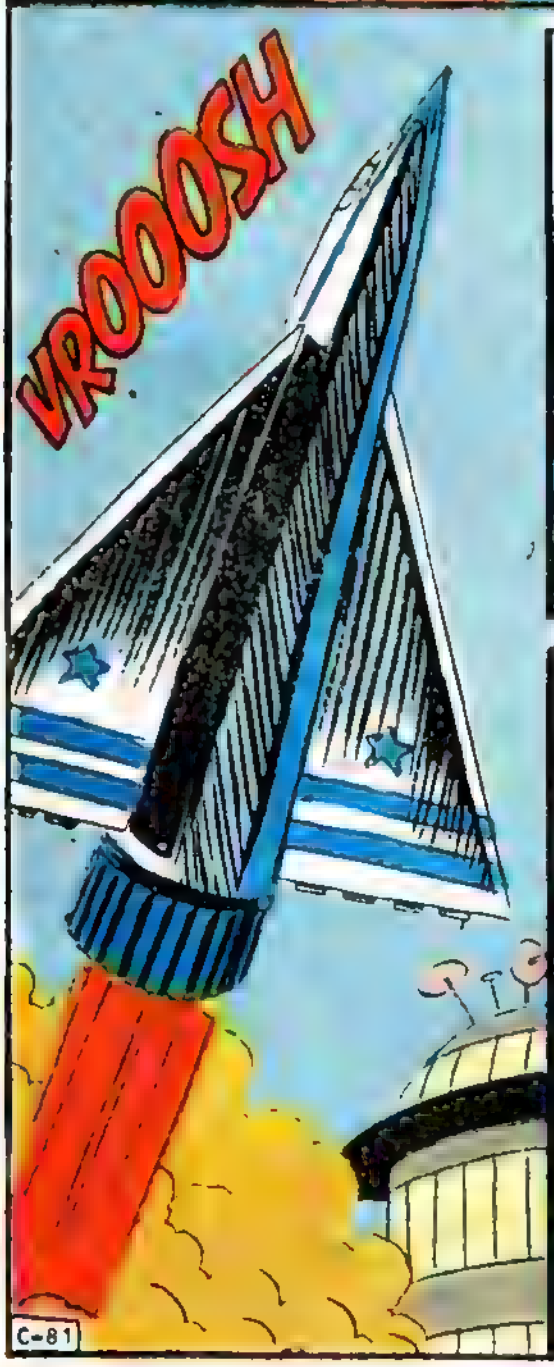
A NEW URGENCY CHARGES THE ENCAMPMENT WITH ENERGY AND PURPOSE!
I'LL GO ARDROM ... IT'S NOBODY'S DUTY BUT MINE!
IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN ONE DIVE--YOUR TIME WILL COME!
THE OLD CHIEF'S PROPHECY IS SOON PROVEN TRUE...
ALREADY FOUR DIVERS HAVE BEEN PULLED UP.. IT'S HOPELESS!
THIS ONE'S STILL CONSCIOUS!
THE GIRL... WEDGED IN A WINDOW BELOW... COULDN'T REACH HER!
GIVE ME THE MASK!
ALMOST AS SOON AS FLASH CLEAVES THE WATER, HE FEELS THE COLDNESS SMOTHER HIS BODY LIKE A HEAVY TENT!
IF I CAN GET AN ARM AROUND HER, I'LL BE LIKE A LIVING HOOK!

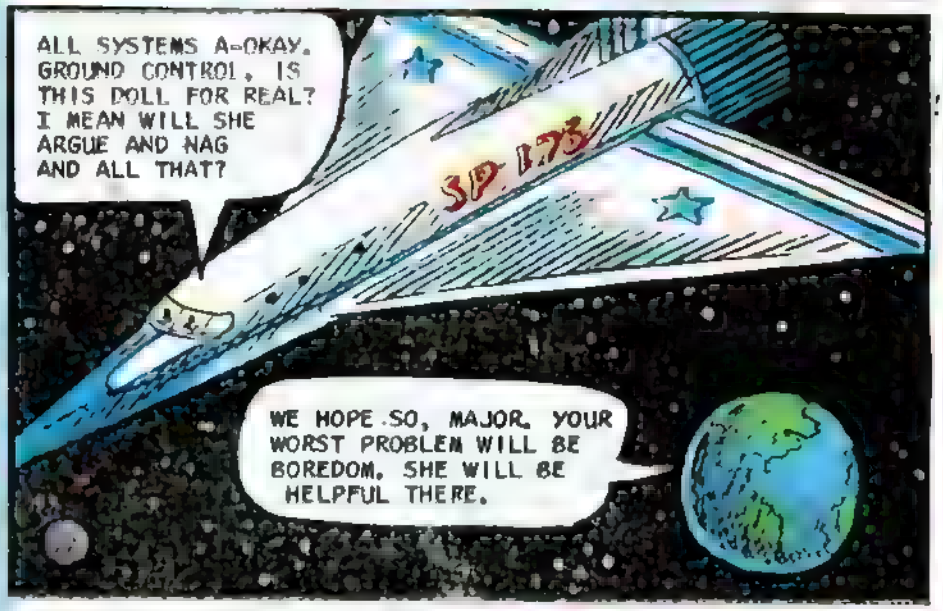
THE SEARCH THROUGH THE MUDDY RUINS TAKES PRECIOUS MINUTES...
MY LEGS... ALMOST PARALYZED!
THERE SHE IS!
WITH HIS LAST EFFORT, FLASH CHURNS THE WATER TO DALE'S SIDE.
CAN'T MOVE MY... ARMS! MUST SIGNAL TO PULL US UP!
UNTIL EVERYTHING TURNS INTO A HARD WET MIDNIGHT...
HOW ARE YOU, DARLING?...
I FEEL LIKE A CIGAR STORE INDIAN WHO'S HAD TOO MUCH ICEWATER.
I TOLD YOU IT WOULD BE A PLEASANT VISIT, DALE. BY THE WAY... WHAT WAS THAT YOU WERE SAYING ABOUT EXCITEMENT?
DON'T REMIND ME!
END

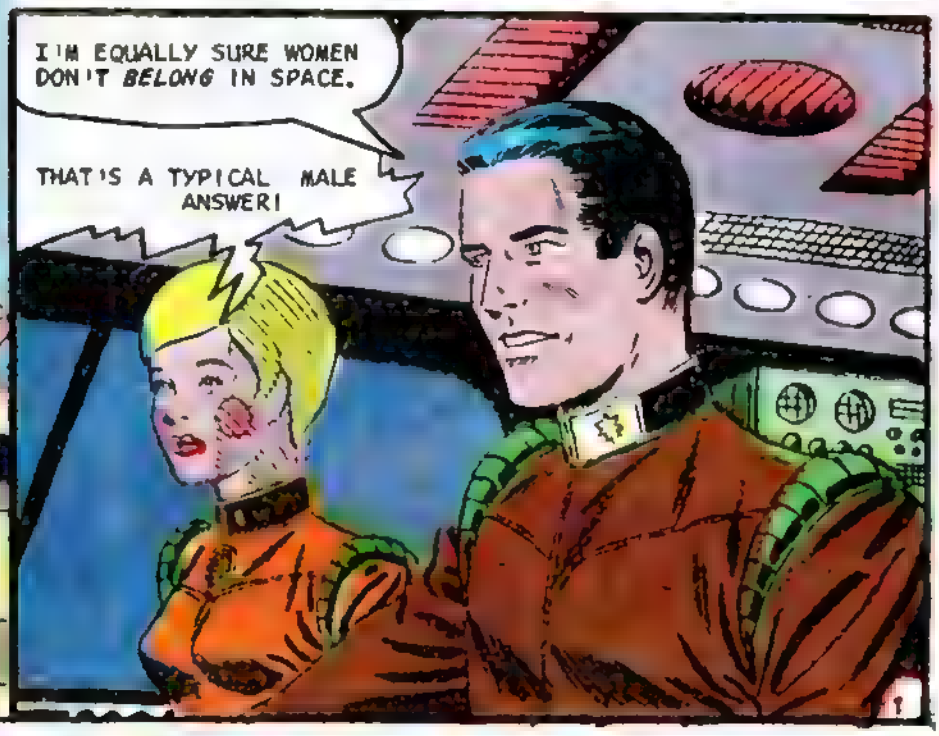
THE LONELY VOYAGE

ABOUT TO EMBARK ON AN ORBITING FLIGHT AROUND VENUS AND RETURN, ASTRONAUT MAJOR DAWSON HAS BEEN PROVIDED WITH A COMPANION.... A SPECIAL KIND OF ROBOT.


I AM CALLED EVA, MAJOR DAWSON. I HAVE BEEN PROGRAMMED TO DUPLICATE PERFECTLY THE MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL RESPONSES OF AN ACTUAL SINGLE GIRL IN NASA. I HOPE THAT WE WILL BE FRIENDS IN THE DAYS AHEAD.
I HOPE SO TOO, DOLL! NOW.... WE'RE GOING TO BLAST OFF.




ALL SYSTEMS A-OKAY. GROUND CONTROL, IS THIS DOLL FOR REAL? I MEAN WILL SHE ARGUE AND NAG AND ALL THAT?
SD 173
WE HOPE SO, MAJOR. YOUR WORST PROBLEM WILL BE BOREDOM. SHE WILL BE HELPFUL THERE.



DAYS BECOME WEEKS AND....

IT'S AMAZING TO ME HOW THEY EQUIPPED YOU TO CONVERSE, RESPOND, LOSE YOUR TEMPER, AND REACT EXACTLY AS A LIVING WOMAN WOULD....

OH. YOU MUST BE ASLEEP AGAIN.

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU SEEM TO GO TO SLEEP EVERY NOW AND THEN EITHER!

THEN...AROUND VENUS AND....

WE'RE GOING HOME, DOLL!

SP-175

MAJOR DAWSON, YOU'RE VERY BRAVE! WE ADMIRE YOU FOR IT!

GREAT! I'M MAKING IT BIG WITH SOME PLASTIC, A TAPE RECORDER AND A PRINTED CIRCUIT!

THEY OFFER HIM VAST REWARDS AFTER HIS HISTORIC FLIGHT BUT THE MAJOR HAS BUT ONE REQUEST...

I'VE GROWN KIND OF FOND OF THAT ROBOT, SIR, YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE CONVERSATIONS WE HAD.

YOU WEREN'T CONVERSING WITH A ROBOT, MAJOR. THERE WAS *ONE GIRL* ON A SPECIAL RADIO CIRCUIT WITH YOU DURING YOUR ENTIRE TRIP. I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO HER RIGHT NOW.

AND...

EVA? WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?

AT FIRST IT WAS ONLY AN ASSIGNMENT, BEN...BUT THEN WE BECAME SORT OF EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED..AND I KNEW I'D MEET YOU LIKE THIS.

END

PROLOGUE
FOR MILLIONS OF YEARS, DEADLY SPORES FROM ORION WANDERED AIMLESSLY THROUGH SPACE... THEN, FINALLY - THEY WERE ATTRACTED TO THE WARM ATMOSPHERE OF THE PLANET ALANIA!
ONCE ON THE SURFACE OF THE HOST ALANIA.. THE LONG SUSPENDED ANIMATION OF THE SPORES ENDED..AND STRANGE, VIOLENT PLANT CREATURES SPRUNG TO LIFE!
LEGIONS, UNDER THE COMMAND OF FLASH GORDON, PLUNGED INTO AN ALL-OUT DEFENSE AGAINST THE ALIEN INVASION!
ALL THE FIRE-POWER OF ALANIA WAS NEEDED TO DEFEAT THE ONSLAUGHT OF THE CARNIVOROUS BEASTS!
THEN - THE LONG NIGHTMARE WAS OVER... ALANIA COULD BREATHE AGAIN. IT WAS FINISHED! BUT, WAS IT? WAS THERE STILL ONE MORE ACT TO BE PLAYED?
1

FLASH GORDON

TRAPPED IN THE CAVE OF THE MUD MEN

Sal Gentile
Pat Boyette
A FEW DAYS AFTER THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CREEPING GREEN PLANTS THAT INVADED ALANIA, DR. ZARKOV IS SUDDENLY TAKEN ILL....
ZARKOV! I CAME AS SOON AS I HEARD! WHAT'S WRONG?
IT'S NOTHING, FLASH! THE DOCTOR SEEMS TO THINK IT'S SERIOUS!
HE'S LOSING STRENGTH IN HIS RIGHT ARM! IT'S SWOLLEN AS IF HE'S BEEN BITTEN BY SOMETHING! I THINK HE MAY HAVE BEEN STUNG BY ONE OF THOSE INVADING PLANTS!
IF IT'S TRUE IT WILL PROVE FATAL IN A FEW DAYS!
ZARKOV! WERE YOU STUNG BY ONE OF THOSE PLANTS?
ONE OF THE LEAVES BRUSHED MY ARM, BUT I FELT NOTHING! SO, I DISMISSED IT FROM MY MIND!

THE DOCTOR IS SUFFERING FROM A COSMIC POISONING! THE MUD TO BE FOUND IN TEMPLOR CAVE ON MONGO IS THE ONLY ANTIDOTE! SINCE IT IS NECESSARY TO APPLY THAT AGENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE... I SUGGEST YOU TAKE DR. ZARKOV THERE!
420
A FEW MINUTES LATER, FLASH, DALE AND THE AILING ZARKOV SET OUT FOR TEMPLOR CAVE! YEARS AGO A SCIENTIFIC GROUP EXPLORED THE MYSTERIOUS CAVE! ONLY ONE RETURNED ALIVE! AND-HE LIVED JUST LONG ENOUGH TO TELL OF THE MIRACULOUS HEALING INGREDIENTS CONTAINED IN THE CAVE MUD..NOW DR. ZARKOV'S ONLY HOPE FOR LIFE!
ACCORDING TO THIS MAP, THE ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE IS IN THE VALLEY OF THE LOST SOULS!
I HAVE IT ON THE SCOPE, FLASH..IT'S A TERRIFYING PLACE!
THE AREA IS SWAMPY..SHOULD MAKE A PERFECT LANDING SPOT!

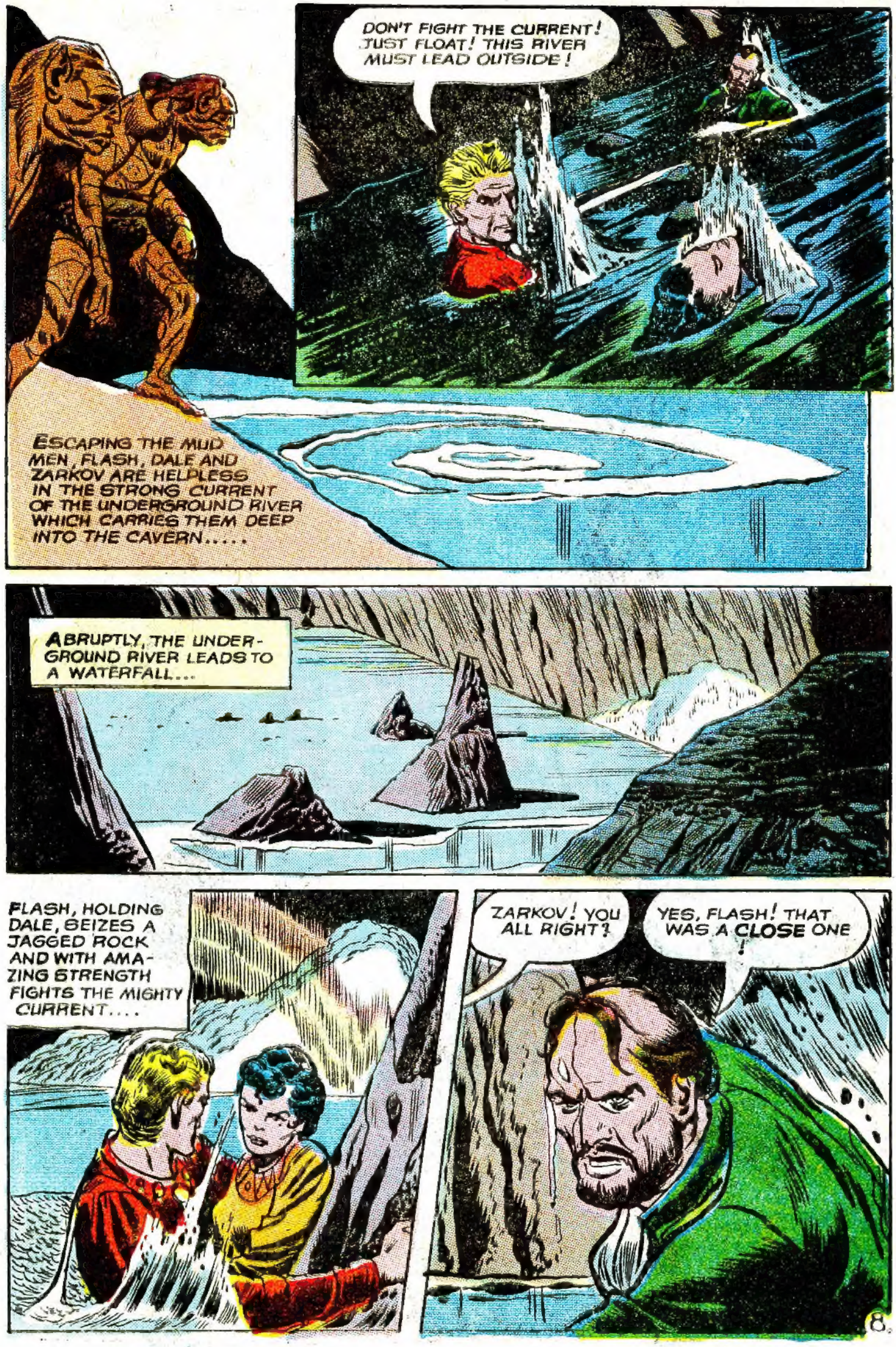
HANG ON! WE'RE GOING IN!
TOUCHDOWN!
..AND THERE IT IS ...TEMPLOR CAVE!
THE HEALING MUD PITS SUPPOSEDLY ARE DEEP INSIDE THE CAVE!
LOOK AT THESE CLAY CARVINGS ON THE WALLS! MUST BE RELICS OF SOME LOST CIVILIZATION!

FLASH! THEY'RE ALIVE!
THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF THEM!
..THEY'RE IMMUNE TO THE RAY PISTOL!

FLASH BATTLES DESPERATELY AGAINST THE MUD MEN!
BUT SOON FLASH IS OVERCOME!!
SILENTLY, THE STRANGE MUD MEN TAKE THEM DEEPER INTO TEMPLOR CAVE...
UNTIL THEY REACH THE KING OF THE MUD MEN!
INTRUDERS! HOW DARE YOU ENTER THE KINGDOM OF THE MUD PEOPLE! BUT, NO MATTER, YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE ALIVE! NEVER!

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

WE MEANT NO HARM, YOUR MAJESTY! MY FRIEND IS WOUNDED! WE CAME TO SEEK THE HEALING POWERS OF YOUR SECRET LAVA!
I DO NOT BELIEVE YOU! YOU CAME TO STEAL OUR SECRETS! I SENTENCE YOU TO DEATH IN THE LAVA PITS!
NOT WITHOUT A FIGHT ..YOU DON'T!
HE'S DISINTEGRATING ... THAT'S IT! THE MUD MEN ARE POWERLESS IF TOUCHED BY WATER!
SEIZE THEM!
THEY'RE AFRAID! QUICK INTO THE RIVER!
DIVE DEEP! THEY WON'T FOLLOW!
7.


DON'T FIGHT THE CURRENT! JUST FLOAT! THIS RIVER MUST LEAD OUTSIDE!
ESCAPING THE MUD MEN, FLASH, DALE AND ZARKOV ARE HELPLESS IN THE STRONG CURRENT OF THE UNDERGROUND RIVER WHICH CARRIES THEM DEEP INTO THE CAVERN.....
ABRUPTLY, THE UNDER-GROUND RIVER LEADS TO A WATERFALL...
FLASH, HOLDING DALE, SEIZES A JAGGED ROCK AND WITH AMA-ZING STRENGTH FIGHTS THE MIGHTY CURRENT....
ZARKOV! YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES, FLASH! THAT WAS A CLOSE ONE!
8.

WHEW! LOOK AT THOSE FALLS! NO WONDER THEY CALL THIS THE VALLEY OF LOST SOULS!
WE'RE LUCKY TO GET OUT OF THERE ALIVE! HOW'S YOUR ARM, ZARKOV?
I DUNNO... IT'S FUNNY...
BUT IN THE EXCITEMENT... I FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT! IT FEELS BETTER NOW! IT'S GOT STRENGTH AGAIN! I'M CURED!
IT'S AMAZING! JUST THE TOUCH FROM ONE OF THOSE MUD MEN HEALED MY ARM! AMAZING!
POOR DEVILS THEY HAVE THE SECRET OF LIFE, AND YET CANNOT LEAVE THEIR CAVE! SOMEDAY WE SHALL RETURN AND FIND OUT MORE ABOUT TEMPLOR CAVE!
THE END